

Maine NRCS Instructions for Local Working Groups (LWGs)

Function

The function of the LWG is to provide recommendations on the local natural resource priorities and criteria for USDA conservation activities and programs. LWGs are normally chaired by the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). If the SWCD is unable or unwilling to chair the LWG, the District Conservationist (DC) is responsible for the chair duties.

Meeting Scheduling

The LWG will meet each year during the months of October, November, December or January to discuss the priorities and recommendation for NRCS program delivery in the subsequent fiscal year. The LWG meetings are open to the public and a notification must be published in one or more newspapers as well as posted on the Maine NRCS website. The public notice of the LWG meeting shall be provided at least 14 calendar days prior to the LWG meeting. The public notice of the LWG meeting will include the time, place and agenda items for the meeting.

Meeting Information

Agendas and information must be provided to the LWG members at least 14 calendar days prior to the scheduled meeting. The DC will assist the LWG chairperson in preparing the meeting agenda and background information for the meeting. Individuals attending the LWG meetings will be given the opportunity to address the LWG. Opportunities to address non-agenda items will be provided if time allows at the end of the meeting.

Conducting Business

The meeting will be conducted as an open discussion among members. Discussion will include a review of the current fiscal year decisions and focus on identifying local natural resource concerns for the subsequent fiscal year that can be treated using program and activities identified in 440-Conservation Program Manual, Part 501, Subpart A, Section 501.0c. All recommendations will be considered.

The following guidelines will govern discussions:

- The chairperson will lead the discussion.
- A note keeper will be assigned to keep a summary or minutes of the meeting.
- Every participant should have an opportunity to speak. The chairperson is responsible for recognizing speakers.
- The chairperson, in consultation with those members present, may establish time limits for discussion on individual agenda items
- Members may be polled, but voting on issues is not appropriate

Record of Meetings

The LWG chairperson will provide the summaries for LWG meetings to the Assistant State Conservationist (ASTC) for Special Projects and the DC within 14 calendar days of the meeting. The local NRCS field office will retain a copy of the LWG meeting summary to make available to the public, if requested. The ASTC for Special Projects will submit the LWG recommendations to the State Technical Committee for review. The State Conservationist and DCs will make the final decision on local fund pools, allocation percentages and local ranking questions for subsequent fiscal year by March 15th.

Response to LWG Recommendations

The DC will inform the LWG as to the decision made in response to the LWG recommendations by April 15th each year. The notification in writing of the decisions will be filed in the local NRCS field office and made available to the public, as requested.

Contact: ASTC for Programs at 207-990-9564.